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SUBJECT: MISSION MEXCIO POSTS HOLD FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS WITH
UNION, PRIVATE SECTOR AND GOVERNMENT ON DRUG ABUSE IN THE
WORKPLACE

REF: MEXICO 4114

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¶1. SUMMARY: In September, AmConsul Matamoros and Embassy Mexico City,s Labor Counselor held separate follow-up meetings aimed at coordinating actions to combat abuse in the workplace. These follow-ups were the promised next steps to a discussion began on July 20 when AmConsul Matamoros hosted a gathering whose primary goal, in addition to opening a discussion on the problems of drug abuse in the workplace, also sought to increase areas of cooperation between the CTM, (Mexico,s largest labor federation) and the USG (Reftel). The first follow up meeting took place in Matamoros on September 7; the second in Mexico City on September 27. The follow-up meeting in Matamoros included a large number of government participants (federal, state and local) as well as a significant number of labor representatives from a variety of unions. The federal government participants informally indicated that the GOM was prepared to participate in what the CTM hopes will develop into a broad bi-national initiative but with a special focus along the US/Mexico border. The September 27 meeting established a de facto executive committee to review and expand on the Matamoros agreements. This meeting also proposed a tentative list of places (not all of them restricted to the border) where a Matamoros type model agreement could be or was already in the process of being established. (Though various suggestions on how to proceed with the pilot program were raised, it was decided to move forward with efforts to document existing programs and local community efforts and wait until a future meeting to determine the long-range and short-range goals of the program.) END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND ON UNION/USG COOPERATION

¶2. In recent months AmConsul Matamoros personnel and Mission Mexico,s Labor Counselor have worked together to promote the idea of a more institutionalized relationship between the USG and one of Mexico,s larger labor organizations, the

Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM). The CTM is perhaps the largest federation of labor unions in Mexico and is roughly equivalent to the US, AFL-CIO. A significant step forward in the effort to promote Union/USG cooperation occurred on July 20 when AmConsul Matamoros hosted a meeting largely organized by the CTM,s Social Welfare Office (Reftel). The intent of this meeting was to discuss ways to support the CTM,s Social Welfare Office,s efforts to deal with the issue of drug abuse in the workplace.

13. Drug abuse in the workplace is a growing problem in Mexico where most observers, including those in the labor sector, now acknowledge that Mexico is both a drug transit and a drug consuming country. Various aspects of the problems of drug abuse in the work place include such issues absenteeism, increases in job related accidents, lost productivity, theft of company property, violence and drug trafficking on company property. In addition to the above issues, the American Chamber of Commerce,s Human Resources and Labor Committee indicates that many employers are now confronting the dilemma of simultaneously dealing with two very different drug problems; (1) substance among executives (who use stimulants to gain a competitive edge at the office) and (2) substance abuse among lower level workers (who use depressants to numb themselves so they can get through the work day).

14. The July 20 meeting ultimately developed beyond just a gathering of USG and CTM officials to include a Mexican government representative, an official of a concerned NGO and the Matamoros President of CANACINTRA (a business alliance roughly equivalent to the US, National Association of Manufacturers) representing the private sector. During the course of that meeting the group settled on the idea of a multidisciplinary project to address the problems of drug abuse in the workplace involving unions, the private sector and the governments of the US and Mexico supporting the

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initiative as appropriate. At the end of the meeting the Mexico City CTM official conferred with the participants to work out the next steps in the initiative. The first thing everyone agreed on was the need for a follow-up meeting to set realistic goals. The participants also wanted to ensure that whatever they attempted would not be duplicative of ongoing efforts of other organizations or government agencies related to the problems of drug abuse. The follow-up meeting was set for August 14.

INITIAL FOLLOW-UP MEETING IN MATAMOROS -----

15. The idea of a multidisciplinary project involving unions, the private sector and the governments of the US and Mexico to examine the problems workplace drug abuse caught the attention of a large number of GOM actors many of whom wanted to be involved. The growing number of potential participants forced the previously scheduled August 14 meeting to be postponed until September 7. This growing number of interested GOM players also prompted an increase in the number of non-GOM actors who wanted to learn about the initiative. Ultimately close to 40 different federal, state, local and various union and private sector participants attended the meeting.

16. The various participants and/or government representatives at the September 7 Matamoros meeting were as follows:

GOM Federal:

Sub-Director for Border Issues of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE);
Director of the Public Security Secretariat,s (SSP) Crime Prevention Office;

Director of Work Equality for Women and Minors, Secretariat of Labor (STPS);
Director of Sustainable Development and Gender Equality, National Institute of Women, INM;
Director General of the Center for Youth Integration (CIJ, a parastatal agency affiliated with the Secretariat of Health);
Director of Sectoral Coordination, Secretariat of Health (SS);

Tamualipas State Government:

Director, Office of Employment, Office of the Governor of Tamualipas;
President of DIF, Tamualipas (Family Welfare Agency);
State Secretary of Public Security;
State Secretary of Public Education;
Director of CERESO (State Prison);
Director of CIPAD (State Center for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment);

Local Union, Government and Private Sector Representatives:

Secretary General, CTM Regional Office, Matamoros;

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President of Maquiladora Association of Matamoros;
Secretary General, Telephone Workers Union;

SIPDIS

Secretary General, Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)

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Workers Union;
Secretary General, Union of Maquiladora and Assembly Industry

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Workers;
Secretary General, Union of Industrial Workers of Maquiladora

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Plants;
Representatives of the Union of Day Laborers and Workers of the Maquiladora Industry (SJOIIM);

President of DIF, Matamoros (Family Welfare Agency);
Municipal Secretary of Public Security, Matamoros;

President of CANACINTRA;
President of COPARMEX (Mexican equivalent US Chamber of Commerce);

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Also in attendance was AmConsul Matamoros, Principal Officer, the Chief of the Consular Section, the Economic coned ELO assigned to the project, the Coordinator of CTM Social Welfare Office in Mexico City and a representative from CTM,s main office in the neighboring state of Coahuila.

17. The main accomplishment of the Matamoros meeting was the establishment of an executive committee to coordinate with the other agencies and organizations interested in the Matamoros model agreement. The members of this committee are the President of CANACINTRA, Matamoros, the Secretary General of the CTM Regional Office in Matamoros and AmConsul Matamoros Principal Officer. During the course of the meeting it soon became apparent that many of the ideas for combating drug abuse in workplace were already being carried out piecemeal (with significant human resources in some cases) but with little real coordination. All the meeting participants agreed to look for ways to reach across the border to US organization dealing with drug problems in the workplace. They also decided to give a prominent role in their activities to those organizations capable of making this initiative known to both the labor and non-labor sectors of the local society.

THE MEXICO CITY FOLLOW-UP

¶8. In comparison to the Matamoros meeting, the September 27 follow-up in Mexico City was a modest affair. The meeting was organized by the CTM,s Social Welfare Office and was attended by representatives from the National Institute of Women (INM), the Secretariats of Health and Labor (SS and STPS respectively), the National Institute of Psychiatry (INP) and Mission Mexico,s Labor Counselor. After a review of the results of the September 7 meeting the participants at the Mexico City gathering discussed the idea of adopting how-to manual recently produced by the INP as the focus of efforts to combat workplace drug abuse.

¶9. The INP manual, entitled &Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace: A Manual for Prevention⁸ provides step by step instructions for developing a drug abuse prevention program. The manual starts with an overview of the drug abuse problem in Mexico, then lays out the basics for implementing the components of a prevention program and ends with a practical guide for evaluating the results of the program. The general consensus was that by using the INP manual as a common guide, all the actors interested in addressing the problem of drug abuse in the workplace would be starting from the same place and following a shared plan of action.

¶10. Over the course of the Mexico City meeting, the need for a common plan of action became increasingly clear as the various actors laid out their different institutional positions. For example the INM made clear that its main interest was in providing assistance to women workers who may have drug problems. The Labor Secretariat representative indicated that the STPS was interested in assisting all workers (young or old, men or women) but that it was not particularly interested in focusing its efforts on the border. Instead the STPS representative indicated that her agency planned to focus its efforts on assisting workers employed in Mexico,s tourist industries in places like Merida, Cancun (in AmConsul Merida,s consular district), as well as in Manzanillo and Puerto Vallarta (AmConsul Guadalajara,s consular district). For its part the CTM indicated that it planned to continue its efforts at or near the border with a particular emphasis on places with nearby USG consulates like AmConsul Matamoros, AmConsul Hermosillo and Saltillo (part of AmConsul Monterrey,s consular district). Mission Mexico,s Labor Counselor offered to advise the relevant USG offices of both CTM and STPS activities in their consular districts related to the effort of combating drug abuse in the workplace. At present the CTM appears most interested in (A) being able to count on the moral leadership of the USG in supporting this initiative and (B) being able to leverage that moral leadership as it works

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to establish contacts and gain material support on the US side of two countries, common border.

COMMENT

¶11. If the presence of so many different actors at the two meetings to discuss the problem of workplace drug abuse is any indication, this initiative to increase Union and USG cooperation seems to be gaining momentum. Although the different GOM agencies have their own clearly stated priorities, a broad range of Mexican authorities are now aware of the initiative and tacitly given it a go-ahead to proceed. At this point the initiative is still very much in the talking stage and a great deal remains to be done before any concrete results can be obtained in the area of dealing with workplace drug abuse. That said, and regardless of the differing priorities of the various GOM agencies, the

majority of other actors such as the unions, the private sector, the NGOs and the state and local governments contacted, all appear willing and eager to support the initiative as originally planned by Mission Mexico personnel and the CTM.

¶12. This message was cleared by AmConsul Matamoros.

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